

THE KETTLE



Straits Area Audubon Society Newsletter - Est. 1983

SAAS meetings are held at **6:00 pm.** on the **2nd Wednesday** of each month September through May at the Cheboygan Area Public Library, 100 S. Bailey St. Refreshments will be provided and you may participate in door prize and raffle drawings.

The scheduling of a meeting or program in the library does not in any way constitute an endorsement by the library of the group, its activities, or of the ideas and opinions expressed during the course of meetings or programs.

To reach us by mail - **Straits Area Audubon Society**; c/o Rosanne Rynerson, 10490 E. US 23, Cheboygan, MI 49721

Mission Statement - The mission of the Straits Area Audubon Society is to educate the community, including its children, about conservation and enjoyment of the natural world with emphasis on the local natural communities of wildlife. This will be accomplished through regular seasonal meetings and by sponsoring field trips, classroom studies and field studies.

Join Straits Area Audubon Society

NAME: _____ TELEPHONE: _____

ADDRESS: _____ E-MAIL: _____

CITY & STATE: _____ NEWS LETTER: [E-Mail] – or – [US-Mail]

Make checks payable to: **Straits Area Audubon Society**
Single Membership: \$12
Family Membership: \$15

Please mail checks to:
Rosanne Rynerson – Treasurer
10490 E. US 23
Cheboygan, MI 49721

May Program

“Six-legged Obsession: Why I look down”

Wednesday, May 13 [6:00 p.m.]

Presented by **Mike Grant**

A treat awaits us with the May program, “Six-Legged Obsession: Why I look down.” Mike Grant, retired scientist from the University of Michigan Biological Station invites people to come learn about the extraordinary world of insects.

Checkered Beetle



Photo supplied by Mike Grant

Insects are among the most successful groups of animals to inhabit the earth with more than one million named species. Probably that many more are waiting for someone to discover them.

Mike Grant shows insects to family



Photo by Kathy Bricker

Mike will explain how insects became so plentiful with so many different species, and examine the complex

relationship between humans and insects. In addition to learning cool facts about the secret lives of insects, we will view some of their beautiful forms in numerous images captured in the field and studio. Mike will bring his own insect collection and also tell about a federally endangered crawling water beetle that he studied in the Maple River, publishing his research in The Coleopterists Bulletin. Please come enjoy this interesting and colorful evening and learn why you want to look down. After the program, participants will share nature sightings and upcoming field trips. Members will elect a new slate of volunteers for 2015-2016, door and raffle prizes will be awarded, and everyone will enjoy refreshments. This program is co-sponsored with EarthWeekPlus.

June Program

SAAS Annual Nature Hike and Potluck Dinner

Wednesday, June 10

Hike [3:00 p.m.]

Potluck Dinner [5:00 p.m.]

Hosted by **Roger and Ann Benter**

Stroll along Lake Huron between Cheboygan State Park and the Michigan Nature Conservancy's Grass Bay Preserve enjoying birds and plants as you go. The beach hike will start at 3:00 pm and Jim and Kathy Bricker will be among those to point out special adaptations of shore-dwelling plants.

At 5:00 p.m. following the hike, we will share the annual end-of-season Audubon potluck dinner.

Meet for both events at the home of Roger and Anne Benter, 4803 Grass Bay Trail. Go to the end of the road past the entrance to Cheboygan State Park. All are welcome to the potluck, even if you cannot join the hike. Call the Benter's at 231-627-3992 for directions.

May Field Trips

Dedication and Ribbon Cutting for the Sunrise Coast Birding Trail

Saturday, May 2, 1:00 p.m.

Location: Mill Creek State Historic Park

The Sunrise Coast Birding Trail is a new trail that highlights the great birding spots from Oscoda to the Mackinac Bridge along US-23. Signs are being erected all along this driving route to direct visiting birders to local birding hot spots. Cheboygan and Emmet County sites are Cheboygan State Park, Mill Creek State Historic Park, Dingman Marsh, Gordon Turner Park, and the Mackinac Straits Hawk Watch. Printed guides and maps are available at many locations.

Trail Signage



Photo by Sue Baker

The dedication will be at Mill Creek State Historic Park and we are hoping for nice weather to have the brief ceremony outside, possibly on the canopy tower deck. Mill Creek will not officially be open at this date, so there will be no admission fee and we can enjoy this special park in solitude. It would be great to see many Audubon members come out and support this Eco-tourism project. After the ceremony, attendees may hike the trails or visit the Hawk Watch in Mackinaw City.

Questions, please call Steve Baker, 231-238-8723

International Migratory Bird Day Count, Emmet County

Saturday, May 9

This national count is conducted every year on the second Saturday in May. This count tallies all species seen and also tracks individual birds noted. If you would like to participate in the Emmet County effort, contact Ed Pike, the compiler. 231-758-3319

Birding Pigeon River Country

[Date to be announced]

Visit some very productive bird habitat in the Pigeon River Country with Don and Donna Mittlestat. We will walk a

section of the railroad grade and see how a beaver site has changed over the years along with a variety of migratory birds. We will also travel an extensive field and savannah habitat for great bird sightings. Lunch after at a local restaurant if interested. Call Donna and Don for details and sign up [906-201-0285].

Northern Harrier



Photo by J Kirby

Big Day Birdathon

Monday, May 18, [6:00 a.m.]

Come join Ed and Steve in this fun day of intense birding. This is the main fundraiser for SAAS as we attempt to find as many species as possible. Members pledge an amount for each species recorded so every checklist tick means more funding for Audubon projects. We will meet at the Mackinaw City State Highway Welcome Center at 6 am and carpool to sites around Mackinaw City and St. Ignace. Feeder counters are also encouraged to record the species seen and report them to Ed Pike. (231-758-3319). Pack a lunch as we will eat on the fly and maximize our field time. Please make your pledge at the May 13 Audubon meeting and you will be sent a list of species seen. Usually we manage to see 110-120 species but weather can be a big factor. Let's hope for sunshine and calm winds.

Field Trip Reports

Owls and Stars

Submitted by **Kathy Bricker**

Saturday, April 11 and Sunday April 12

On April 11 and 12, Ed Pike and Mary Stewart Adams spoke at Emmet County's Headlands Dark Sky Park near Mackinaw City. In total, 115 people attended. The SAAS potluck on the first night was enjoyed by 14 people, 5 members and 9 guests. Emmet County was swamped with calls for reservations for both events, as this joint event

demonstrating the importance of the dark sky park has become a traditional highlight of the year. After Ed explained his research indoors, he led everyone outside to watch the nets being set. Then Mary spoke at the lakeside about Venus, Jupiter, and the many stars and constellations overhead. The first night, the first net check yielded a saw-whet owl, to the delight of 65 people. Ed processed the bird, showing how he ages and sexes these owls with charts provided by the Bird Banding Laboratory. People visiting on the second night were less fortunate, since the only owl was captured at 12:45 am. Everyone enjoyed the moon-less views of the night sky, however, and resolved to try their luck again next year.

Jordan, Harbor Springs, Indian River, Levering, Mackinaw City, Onaway, Petoskey, Vanderbilt, and Wolverine. Some, however, have traveled here from Edwardsburg, Fenton, Gaylord, Grayling, Maple City, Marquette, McMillan, National City, Naubinway, Niles, Oscoda, and Williamsburg. Some have said that they like to stop in route to Whitefish Point Bird Observatory, while others like to just stay in Mackinaw City for this migration. For photos and stories and to lend your financial support to the raptor research and education, go to www.MackinacRaptorWatch.org.

Raptors Above at Mackinac Straits Hawk Watch

Submitted by **Kathy Bricker**

Sunday, April 12

On April 12, Steve Baker shared what his eagle-sharp eyes found in the sky with 7 members and 5 guests at the Mackinaw City Hawk Count.

Look to the sky



Photo by Jim Bricker

While it seemed that the huge kettles were 'yesterday' and we were assured with promises of more birds 'tomorrow,' the attendees still enjoyed a balmy spring day of relaxing and chatting together. In all, 89 raptors were tallied by hawk counter Kevin Georg. His season totals are more impressive. In 300 hours of counting, he has observed more than 13,160 raptors, roughly 43 birds every hour on average. As expected, the winners are Red-Tailed Hawks, of which 8,000 have migrated north through the Straits. Rough-legged Hawks, at 74 birds, and Golden Eagles, at 320, are the other stars of the show, distinguishing Mackinac Straits as a vital migration corridor. The hawk watch continues through June 7, so bring a lawn chair, binoculars, and visit anytime. In March, 162 visits were recorded, including our first visitor from Canada, from Sault Ste. Marie Ontario. Most people live nearby, in Boyne City, Carp Lake, Charlevoix, Cheboygan, Cross Village, East

Owl Banding with Ed Pike and MSRW banding team at Cheboygan State Park

Submitted by **Kathy Bricker**

Wednesday, April 15

Sixteen people, including ten guests, came to view the owl banding research at Cheboygan State Park, conducted by Mackinac Straits Raptor Watch. While checking the widely-spread owl nets was good walking exercise, the highlight of this field trip was the Northern Lights.

Watching the Northern Lights



Photo by Jim Bricker

It was especially fun to watch the photo-crazy reaction of the biologists from southern Michigan (Laura Makielski), Kentucky (Loren Taylor), and Pennsylvania (Kevin Georg) who had never seen the aurora before this April. Oohs and aahs alternated as the spires changed hue from green to yellow. Over the human excitement, Ed Pike still pointed out the song of northern leopard frogs. Since the aurora has been seen often lately, watch for its appearance in advance by checking www.spaceweather.com with a click on the Current Aurora map on the left side. While the aurora made the evening worthwhile, the score otherwise was 16 people to zero owls. It was the first night of the spring that owl researchers Laura and Loren were skunked. They have captured, processed and released 116 saw-whet owls, three long-eared owls, and two barred owls. Of the saw-whets, 11 have been previously banded, in Ontario, New

Hampshire, Indiana, and elsewhere in Michigan. They learned that one of the birds is, at the least, going to turn five years old this year, and another will be four. Birds cannot be aged through measurements after the third year, so banding research is the only way to know definitively that these birds are that old. To arrange a tour of the owl banding station, please contact Ed Pike.

Ducks and Hawks around the Straits

Submitted by **Bev Kirby**

Friday, April 24

Meeting at 7:30 a.m. at the Mackinaw City Welcome Center, 9 members and friends of the Straits Area Audubon Society began their search for ducks and hawks around the Straits. It was 31 degrees and sunny as we crossed the Mackinac Bridge and saw that 1000s of Redhead ducks were now back on the north east side. Traveling along the St. Ignace shoreline we were able to find Red-breasted Mergansers, Common Mergansers, American Wigeon, Mallard, Canada Goose, Greater Scaup, Common Goldeneye and Bufflehead. Flickers and Song Sparrows were seen and a Merlin motored over the Straits. Long-tailed Ducks, and Red-necked Grebes were soon spotted along with Ring-billed and Herring Gulls, American Robin, Starlings, Rock Pigeons, American Crow, Grackles and Double-crested Cormorants. We found Gadwall and a Mute Swan, and a Sharp-shinned Hawk. Soon we were looking at 3 beautiful male Wood Ducks and a beautiful pair of Green-winged Teal along with 2 Ring-Necked Ducks at the Wastewater Treatment Plant in St. Ignace. Turkey Vultures, Killdeer and Lesser Scaup were spotted along the shore and it was time for a snack. Frosted Carrot Bars and Blueberry Apple Muffins were enjoyed and on we went to Rudyard.

Tundra Swans



Photo by Jack Kirby

Here we were excited to see 115 Tundra Swans eating and sleeping in a field. Another field gave us almost 150 Sandhill Cranes. Seven or eight American Kestrels, 3 Bald Eagles, 20 or so American Tree Sparrows, a Rough-legged Hawk and more flying Sandhill Cranes kept us busy. After

lunch in Pickford a Sharp-tailed Grouse was seen by some and 2 Northern Harriers were observed as they flew low across the fields. At this point two birders continued to the western UP and another two went north to Whitefish Point to attend the annual Spring Fling. The rest of the group found Northern Pintail as they went back to the Mackinac Straits Raptor Watch in Mackinaw City. A total of 40 species were observed. Thanks to leader Steve Baker for getting us out and about on this great spring day in northern Michigan.

Field Trippers



Photo by Jack Kirby

Participants: Steve Baker, Jack and Bev Kirby, Don and Donna Mittlestat, Glen Matthews, Diane Morand, Sharon Szczesny, Beth Ensor, Jim Harrison,

Field Report

History of the Osprey Platform at Gordon Turner Park

Submitted by **Faye Johnston**

The Osprey platform was erected in 1991.

Two Ospreys were fledged in 1992.

Volunteer workers on the Osprey platform project were: Jim Johnston, Steve Baker, Jeff Dykehouse, Gary Kramer, Wilfred, Eunice and son Mike Mandrick.

The water level in 1991 was much higher than 2015. Jim Johnston provided an ice auger to drill through the frozen marsh ice. Wilfred and son Mike Mandrick located the site for the holes. Eunice Mandrick supplied cookies for the workers.

During the work, Jim's favorite wrench was dropped down one of the holes. He went back the next day with a magnet and retrieved it.

During the year 2001, Wilfred Mandrick, Gary Kramer and Jim Johnston trimmed overgrown brush so the platform could be viewed.

Erection of the Osprey platform



Photo supplied by Faye Johnston

White Sightings in April

Submitted by **Jack Kirby**

This leucistic Red-tailed Hawk sighting was at the MSRW.
Leucistic Red-Tailed Hawk 4/17/2015



Photo by Steve Baker

Al and Jean Moberly also had a leucistic nature sighting.
"We had a white squirrel in our feeder this morning! This is a first for us".

Leucistic squirrel 4/20/2015



Photo by Al Moberly

SAAS Chapter Notes

TREASURER'S REPORT

Submitted by **Rose Rynerson - Treasurer**

Please join me in welcoming this month's new members:

Jeff Seiple

Peri & Joe McGuiness

Darlene Boda

&

Eowyn Bates

At upcoming programs, it will be great to hear about the birds visiting your homes.

GENERAL MEETING MINUTES STRAITS AREA AUDUBON SOCIETY

Submitted by: **Diane Morand - Secretary**

Date: April 8, 2015

Program: Hiking the North Country Trail

Time: 6:00p.m.

Location: Cheboygan Area Public Library

Attendance: 39 members and 6 guests for a total of 45

Preliminary announcements:

*Judi Chimner announced activities and displays for Earth Week Plus Expo on April 18th and encouraged everyone to attend and also attend the many adventures throughout April and May - brochures are available.

Kathy Bricker urged members to sign up as session monitors for the expo and to help in the SAAS activity room.

*Dale Giddings announced that Big Birding Day is approaching and passed around sheets to make pledges.

*Steve Baker passed out brochures for the new Sunrise Coast Birding Trail and announced the trail dedication will be held at Mill Creek Historic Park on May 2nd.

Our speakers for the evening were Al and Jean Moberly (who will be hosting an Earth Week Plus adventure on Beginning Birding at their home on April 19th) telling us of their hikes with friends on the North Country Trail in the Upper Peninsula and showing a combination of theirs and Steve Baker's slides along the trail. They began hiking portions of the trail beginning in 2001 at the Mackinac Bridge and have gone west to the Sturgeon Valley

Wilderness Area and hope to continue to the Porkies and Iron Mountain. They biked a portion around Marquette and approached logistics by spotting cars, dividing the group in two and hiking from opposite ends and trading keys in the middle, and hiking out and back. To encourage more of us to hike the trail, they also brought literature to share.

After the program hawk counter Kevin Georg gave an update on Hawk Watch sightings and reminded us of the special Straits area in which we live. Currently the highlights have been the large number of Red-tailed Hawks and Golden Eagles.

Donna Mittlestat announced a field trip April 24th to the eastern U.P. to look for water birds and a stop on the way back at the Hawk Watch. Contact Steve Baker if you plan to go.

Bev Kirby monitored bird sighting reports by Roy MacFarland, Jim Bricker, Nancy Waldron, Don Mittlestat, Glen Matthews, and Dale Giddings which included Pileated Woodpeckers, Fox and Tree Sparrows, Kestrels, Juncos, Sapsuckers, Redpolls, Bluebirds, Bohemian and Cedar Waxwings, and an audible Meadowlark.

The nominating committee will be meeting soon. Anyone interested in being an officer, web-master or another volunteer position should see a member of the committee: Jim Bricker, Dale Giddings, Diane Morand or Chris Grant.

A letter from the Rieger's is available for sharing.

Refreshments were provided by Gary and Jane Roe, Mary Liebner, Missy and Jim Harrison, and Jack and Bev Kirby.

Mike Grant will present next month's program "Looking Down".

The June potluck will be at the Benter's home.

[Second Request]

Nominating Committee announced

Submitted by **Jim Bricker**

If you feel it's time to do more for SAAS than be a member, now is your chance. Dale Giddings, Diane Morand, Chris Grant, and I will meet soon to discuss the new executive committee and roster of other volunteers. We will review all positions, so you can change if you wish. In particular we need a volunteer to be President (term limits prevent Dale from serving for life), another to take over the website from Roy MacFarland, and another to improve the visibility and income from the monthly raffles. Please let us know if you can help improve SAAS in 2015-2016. Have questions or want to volunteer, talk to Jim at 231-627-4830 or pivot777777@hotmail.com

SAAS Wildlife Discovery Room a Hit

Submitted by **Kathy Bricker**

SAAS sponsored an entire room at the April 18 EarthWeekPlus Expo. THANK you to everyone who helped there: Dale Giddings on setup and take-down; Marilee, Ben, and Drew Lillie introducing people to beavers; Glen Matthews and Eowyn Bates showing their skull collections;

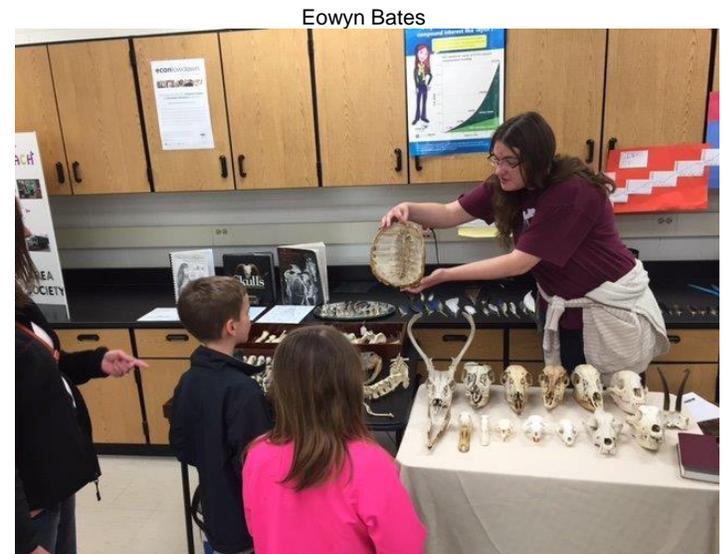


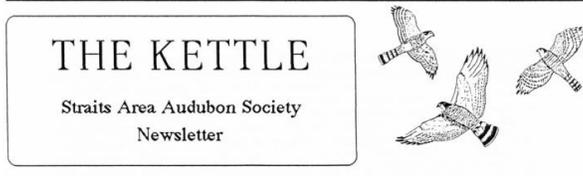
Photo by Al Moberly

Jim Bricker and Rose Rynerson telling about rocks; Cyndi Kress and Diane Morand overseeing animal jigsaw puzzles and nature sticker table; Cathy Freebairn and Al and Jean Moberly showing bird nests and feathers; Mary Liebner and Cindy Cartmill giving out pea seeds for children to plant; and Nancy Waldron and Diane Matthews tallying the 330 visitors. Thanks also to the University of Michigan Biological Station for loaning specimens and equipment and everyone who brought nature posters and other supplies. EarthWeekPlus continues through May with Adventures both indoor and outdoor. Visit www.earthweekplus.org for more information

Does SAAS have a Logo?

Submitted by **Jack Kirby**

The latest need for a SAAS logo came about when we were asked to supply our society's logo for the Sunrise Coast Birding Trail signage. Yes we have an "official" logo composed of kettling hawks, which was quickly incorporated into the Kettle newsletter heading. This logo was designed and skillfully drawn by Cindy Speeter in 1987 and is the perfect logo for **The Kettle**.



The problem comes about when we try to use this logo for other applications. **This logo just does not have high enough definition to show up well in documents or on signs or letterhead or the website and does not fully represent who we are and who we serve.** For years, we have talked about the need and maybe it's time to do something about it! Let's make this a summer project and have some "logos" for review at the September meeting. Be creative! Think how it would look on your car window or on your birding hat and remember we are in the Straits Area.

Nature Website for Kids of All Ages

Submitted by **Al Moberly**

Preparing for EarthWeekPlus, I discovered this amazing website with anything you want to know about any part of nature. Enjoy! <http://www.biokids.umich.edu/critters/>

For Your Information

Names & Numbers

Straits Area Audubon Society 2014 - 2015 Officers

President: **Dale Giddings** - 231-525-8874
[No email]
Vice President: **Connie Rieger** - 231-818-9065
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Treasurer: **Rosanne Rynerson** - 231-597-9788
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Past President: **Roger Benter** - 231-627-3992
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Exe.Com. At-Large: **Chris Grant** - 231-238-8216
chrisgrant723@yahoo.com
MAS Representative: **Donna Mittlestat** - 906-201-0285
ddmstat@hotmail.com

Nature Links

Michigan Audubon Society
www.michiganaudubon.org
MNA [Michigan Nature Association]
www.michigannature.org
The Nature Conservancy
<http://nature.org/greatlakes>

Little Traverse Conservancy

www.landtrust.org

Whitefish Point Bird Observatory

www.wpbo.org

HMANA Mackinaw Straits Raptor Watch

http://hawkcount.org/month_summary.php?rsite=613

Mackinaw Straits Raptor Watch

www.MackinacRaptorWatch.org

Note from the Editor: All articles and photos for *THE KETTLE* should be submitted to the editor's e-mail box one week BEFORE the end of a publication month. This will allow the e-mail edition to be sent out by the first of the month and the printed edition to be mailed by the 4th day of the month.

Thank you. **Jack Kirby** [saaskettle2011@gmail.com]

SAAS thanks **Williams Office Equipment** for donating printing costs for **The Kettle**.

Please consider them for all your Computer, Copier, Printer and Fax needs.

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"The Kettle" will see you in
September. Have a Great
Summer ☺

The Kettle Staff

Jack & Bev Kirby

Roger & Ann Benter

Maryann Kopernik

Williams Office Equipment

This is my last issue as editor of THE KETTLE. I would like to thank all of you who contributed articles, photos, stories, trip reports and ideas to make this a great Straits Area Audubon Society newsletter.

Thank you --- Jack Kirby